

# **EXHIBIT 26**



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Aviation  
Administration

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**Memorandum**

Subject: **ACTION:** Worldwide Threat Questions and  
Answers

Date: OCT 30 2000

From: Manager, Strategic Analysis Division, ACI-200

Reply to: Stauffer  
Attn. of: x73492

To: ACO-500

Attached are unclassified questions and answers regarding the threat overseas that were prepared for use in this season's round of air carrier training. Please provide copies to all Principal Security Inspectors for passage to the air carriers for which they are responsible. These documents are to be used only when conducting training or providing briefings, are to be briefed verbally, and copies are not to be made available to the listening audience. Any other requests for possible use or dissemination of these documents should be directed to me.

Stefanie C. Stauffer

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## MIDDLE EAST

**What is the most serious terrorist threat to the United States at present?**

The Usama Bin Laden network is considered the single most serious threat to the United States and its interests at the present time. Bin Laden is essentially his own state sponsor; that is, he has no need to rely on any one country as a benefactor. He is wealthy in his own right and has augmented his holdings considerably through solid investments in a number of countries. Bin Laden's principal resource, however, is a large and loyal following, comprised of assets ranging from sympathizers to actual operatives.

Usama Bin Laden created his network in the late 1980s and named it al-Qaida (the Base). This organization was originally intended for use as a tracking system for those individuals who were fighting the Soviets during the war in Afghanistan. In the aftermath of the war, al-Qaida evolved into a global network which now embodies supporters of every nationality, including British and American citizens. Using these multinational ties that al-Qaida has developed, Bin Laden can call on individuals and groups worldwide to prepare for and carry out terrorist attacks. Bin Laden has also instituted a set of goals for al-Qaida which include the establishment of a Muslim state throughout the world; the removal of all western influence from Muslim countries—particularly Saudi Arabia—by using violence; and the destruction of regimes which are considered corrupt and non-Islamic, for example, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Bin Laden's organization has access to a variety of weapons, including small and heavy arms, missiles and explosives. In addition, instruction in hijacking techniques is being provided in Bin Laden's Afghanistan training camps.

While al-Qaida is comprised primarily of individuals who are not affiliated with an organized group, it does serve as an umbrella organization under which some organized Sunni Islamic extremist groups operate. Among these are two Egyptian groups, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Al-Gama'at al-Islamiya; the Pakistan-based Harakat ul-Mujahedin; and the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh. The leaders of these four groups were all co-signers of the February 1998 fatwa (religious ruling) in which Bin Laden called on his followers to "attack the U.S. and its allies everywhere." Collectively, these groups referred to themselves as the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders.

Bin Laden's organization has been busily engaged in anti-U.S. activities, which include the shooting down of U.S. helicopters in Somalia in 1992 and the bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Bin Laden's organization has also been connected to several incidents which occurred in 1995: the plot to bomb U.S. airliners flying from Southeast Asia; the bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad; the assassination attempt on Egyptian President Mubarak, and the bombing of a joint U.S./Saudi military facility. In addition, Bin Laden has specifically threatened U.S. civil aviation on two occasions: in May 1998 he proposed a scenario describing the damage a missile could do to an American airliner transporting troops, and in August 1998, he called on his militant followers to bring down or hijack a U.S. or Israeli aircraft.

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